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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SARKOZY ARTICULATES HIS FRAMEWORK FOR  
FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED TAGS)

REF: A. EMBASSY PARIS DAILY SIPRNET REPORT FOR JANUARY 13  
[1](#)B. 2008

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (U) In this annual New Year's message to the Diplomatic Corps on delivered on January 18, President Sarkozy laid out a theoretical justification for recasting France's role on the international scene in the twin challenges before the international community: climate change and the "return of the religious extremism" as a factor in international politics. Sarkozy called for "four innovations" to prevail over these challenges: 1) returning France to the "heart of the occidental family," 2) dedicating France to a "diplomacy of reconciliation," 3) affirming "diversity" while demanding "its corollary, reciprocity," and 4) working towards the "construction of a world order adapted to the emergence of new powers and therefore capable of dealing effectively with the challenges of the 21st century." The specific initiatives Sarkozy said France would be pursuing during the coming year -- from reform of the UNSC to pressing for continued sanctions against Iran, from expansion of the G-8 to the hosting of an Afghanistan donors' conference -- all link to Sarkozy's projected role for France as leading the way towards the international unity needed to meet the environmental challenge to humanity from global warming and the political challenge to secular democracy from religious fundamentalists. END SUMMARY.

NEW YEAR'S BEST WISHES TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

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[1](#)2. (U) President Nicolas Sarkozy delivered the French president's annual New Year's best wishes to the Diplomatic Corps on the afternoon of January 18. Ambassador Stapleton and DCM Pekala attended the event -- remarks followed by reception -- at the Elysee palace. Traditionally, French presidents have used these events to review administration achievements and to unveil or re-iterate upcoming foreign policy initiatives. True to form, Sarkozy went beyond review of achievements and listing of initiatives, and laid out the justification for his projected reform of France's role on

the international scene. Sarkozy began by pointing out -- as he does in connection with nearly every area of public policy -- "I was not elected to accept things as they are. I was elected to reform France through a continuous process of profound reform." He also underlined that France's foreign policy "had to stem from a lucid analysis, realistic about France's place in the world as the world is today."

#### TWO GREAT CHALLENGES -- AND THE NEED FOR UNITY

13. (U) Sarkozy's analysis of the state of the world today posits two great challenges -- climate change and religious fundamentalism. Sarkozy said that global warming's "menace to humanity" and the intention of "certain groups to impose a fundamentalist, hegemonic and intolerant" religiosity would "restructure international society in the 21st century possibly more than ideologies did in the 20th." Sarkozy then argued that these challenges could be successfully met only "on one condition" -- "finding the unity" necessary for concerted, effective international action. The four major "innovations" in France's international affairs posture that Sarkozy then claimed he had or was putting in place, and the range of specific initiatives that he said France would be pursuing in the coming year link directly, in Sarkozy's view, to fostering the international unity necessary for taking effective action against these two challenges. COMMENT: In his presentation to the members of the diplomatic corps Sarkozy projected as a candidate on the campaign trail -- working hard to win over his listeners to his way of looking at things. As he has always done in connection with his domestic reform campaigns, Sarkozy sets great store in bringing people around to share his diagnosis of the situation, from which follow the courses of action he proposes. END COMMENT.

#### FOUR "INNOVATIONS"

14. (U) The four foreign policy "innovations" Sarkozy claimed to be implementing are: 1) returning France to the "heart of her Occidental family," 2) pursuing a "diplomacy of

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#### C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED TAGS)

conciliation," 3) affirming "diversity" while demanding that "its corollary, reciprocity" be honored by others, and 4) advocating a reformed international institutional order "adapted to the emergence of new powers and therefore capable of dealing effectively with the challenges of the 21st century." While he rejected previous government's use of the word "hyperpower" to describe the U.S., he did describe a multi-polar worldview with Europe become one of the active poles.

15. In connection with the first, he evoked France's new-found closeness to the U.S. Sarkozy underlined that France was a "voluntary partner" of the U.S., and an "independent ally and friend," while clearly implying that France, for the sake of its own effectiveness and credibility, was right to abandon its pretensions to representing an alternative to U.S. leadership. Sarkozy also underlined, in connection with France's getting back in step with the major western democracies, that doing so was key to advancing France's leadership role in the EU. He said that "it was France's ambition to see the EU emerge as an important global actor in the 21st century," and that that required "the development of an effective European defense" capability (ESDP) independent of NATO. He stressed that, in the face of today's "range of threats and crises" NATO and ESDP were complimentary spans of a single security and defense architecture for Europe. He said that France's new-found unity with the U.S. and new-found unity with its EU partners had reinforced France's leadership credibility both "internally," among the western democracies, and "externally," throughout the rest of the world.

¶6. (U) Sarkozy argued that France's "diplomacy of conciliation" worked to attenuate differences, and, by implication, promote the unity necessary for effective international action. Sarkozy justified his recent dealings with Qadhafi and Hugo Chavez in terms of this constructive engagement, French-style, that he calls "diplomacy of conciliation." He went on to say that France's foreign policies would henceforth be anchored in the affirmation of "diversity, and its corollary, reciprocity." He justified the elevation of "diversity" to a guiding principle for foreign policies as follows, "Even more than the fight for democracy, it seems to me that the fight for diversity -- for openness, tolerance, acceptance of others in all their difference -- is fundamental. It is, in a way, the precondition for extending liberty and durably implanting democracy." Lastly, Sarkozy claimed the "innovation" of advocating a reformed system of multi-lateral institutions, and again justified these proposals as necessary for achieving needed unity in the face of global challenges.

#### SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

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¶7. (U) Once he had dispatched the carefully constructed theoretical underpinnings of his framework for France's foreign policy, Sarkozy took up the range of specific initiatives that France would be pursuing in the coming year.

NOTE: Sarkozy's speech, in its entirety, is available, in English, on the Elysee website at [www.elysee.fr](http://www.elysee.fr); in addition, post has reported separately (ref) on the outlook for France's Africa policy as reflected in the speech; furthermore, French policy under Sarkozy in the critical areas of Iran, Afghanistan, NATO/ESDP, and Middle East Peace have the subject of extensive and regular reporting. END

NOTE. Among the most salient of Sarkozy's specific initiatives aimed at reforming international institutions are enlarging the Security Council in its two categories of members, and enlarging the G-8 to include, "progressively" China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa. In addition, Sarkozy called for reform of the IMF, calling on it to become more inclusive of emerging economic powers and to develop a way of engaging the large international oil and other similarly profitable global companies, in financing the alleviation of poverty. He also said that "all must be done" to produce an agreement by 2009 up to the "colossal challenge of global warming via the Bali process."

¶8. (U) He reiterated France's commitment to continuing sanctions against Iran, while aiming to return Iran to full respectability "once it respects international law." Sarkozy

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confirmed that France would host the next Afghanistan donors conference. He said France would support "the process envisaged at Annapolis" to result "in the creation of a Palestinian State side-by-side to the State of Israel." He reviewed France's priorities for its upcoming presidency of the EU -- the Lisbon treaty, the environment and energy, immigration, agriculture, and implementing ESDP -- and he recommitted to "launching that important civilizational project," the Mediterranean Union.

#### COMMENT

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¶9. (U) In this speech, Sarkozy did not unveil any new or unexpected initiatives, but he did attempt to link France's foreign policy initiatives to pressing international problems without referring to "France's glory" or "France's history and civilization". Sarkozy nevertheless articulated an ambitious foreign policy framework that should help guide our understand of the French approach over the coming months including during its Presidency of the European Union that begins in July. END COMMENT.